

1743 Keeping and Destroying Records  
NIH Records Control Schedule

2800 DATA PROCESSING

This chapter covers records created or used in management of computer operations, in computer research and technology, in the development implementation and operation of ADP systems and applications, and in documentation of computer programs and data sets.

EXCLUDED from this chapter are Master and History files of data in computer-compatible media. Such files are or will be included under appropriate subject/function headings.\*

\*Note: Very few computer compatible data sets at NIH have been authorized for disposal. Such files will be included in an update to this schedule which will be issued later.

**A. ADP Management and Research**

Records related to the management of ADP operations and applications and to research in ADP hardware and software development.

EXCLUDED from this chapter are:

- (1) Administrative records in the Office of the Director, CIT (see items 1100-C-31a, 1100-C-12a, 1100-D-1b and 1100-M-1b),
- (2) Records of biomedical research programs and of biomedical information systems which use ADP but are not specifically oriented to advance the state of the art in ADP; (see section 3000-J or 8100),
- (3) Feasibility studies and systems analyses conducted prior to installation of equipment or systems (1700-A-6).

2800-A-1      CIT Project and Research Records: These records, created throughout the two branches and the four laboratories of the division, are largely accumulated by programmers, specialized technicians, and others who are involved in computer technology. The records may relate either to formal projects involving users in and out of NIH who pay for the services, or to theoretical research not related to formal projects. Results of the latter research normally appear in technical journals.

With one exception noted below, the contents of these records are varied, diffuse, and unstandardized in format and content. Generally, they are a mixture of record

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and non-record materials accumulated during the life of the project. They may include, but clearly are not limited to, correspondence, test data, data on experimental procedures, printed reference materials, rough drafts, notes, progress and other reports, memoranda, and a variety of other materials. These records also comprise papers relating to project planning, procedures, and other aspects of the project.

a. Materials relating to formal projects.

Disposition: Destroy 5 years after completion of project, or when technical data in the files are of no further value for research or other uses, as appropriate.

b. Materials accumulated in research studies, not related to formal projects.

Disposition: Destroy 4 years after completion of study, or when data are of no further value for research, as appropriate.

2800-A-2      Programmer trouble reports and requests for refunds, pertaining to technological or administrative problems which may result in refunds to users.

Disposition: Destroy when 2 years old.

2800-A-3      Clinical and Management Systems Project files relating to the development, installation, and operation of automated and other systems, containing copies of contracts, work papers, operation papers, correspondence, memoranda, and related materials.

Located in CC, Office of Clinical and Management Systems.

Disposition: Destroy 6 years after completion of project.

2800-A-4      Management studies of clinical and management systems, containing documentation showing initiation of the study, covering memoranda, work papers, policy analyses, final reports, and related papers.

Located in CC, Office of Clinical and Management Systems.

a. Final reports.

Disposition: PERMANENT. Transfer to Federal Records Center 5 years

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after completion of study. Offer to the National Archives 10 years after completion.

b. All other files.

Disposition: Destroy 5 years after completion of study.

2800-A-5      Clinical information utility search reports, which request data on the treatment of former patients, from machine-readable tapes.

Located in CC, Office of Clinical and Management Systems.

Disposition: Destroy when 4 years old.

**B. Software and Data Documentation**

Records which describe computer programs and data sets in such a way as to make it possible to see the programs and process the data.

2800-B-1      System Specifications: Documents containing definitions of the system including functional requirements, data requirements, system/subsystem specifications, requests for the system and authorizing directives.

Located in office responsible for the request for the system.

a. For a proposed system which is not approved or implemented.

Disposition: Destroy 1 year after final action.

b. For systems which are implemented.

1. When all related machine-readable data are authorized for disposal.

Disposition: Destroy one year after system is discontinued.

2. When related data is not authorized for disposal.

Disposition: Follow disposition instructions which apply to related data sets. If any data in the system is permanent the system specifications are also permanent and must be offered to the National Archives together with the data. If all data in the system

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is authorized for disposal and the system is discontinued, destroy specifications 1 year after termination of system.

2800-B-2     System Test Documentation including test plans and test results analyses.

a. For a system which is implemented.

Disposition: Destroy 1 year after completion of testing.

b. For a system which is not implemented.

Disposition: Destroy as soon as no longer needed.

2800-B-3     File Specifications: Definitions of the logical and physical characteristics of each record, element, or item of data, including names and tags or labels; record layout, that is, relative position, form, format and size of data elements; validity checks, update and access conditions, recording medium and volume, and specifications of all codes used (excluding code books for all FIPS codes).

Located in users' files.

Disposition: Follow disposition instructions which apply to the data files.

2800-B-4     User Guides and Manuals

a. Located in users' files.

Disposition: Follow disposal instructions which apply to related data.

b. Located in CIT.

Disposition: Retain as long as needed in user relationships, then destroy.

2800-B-5     Output Specifications listing each type of output by title, and tag, format, selection criteria, volume and frequency, media, graphic displays and symbols, security and privacy restrictions.

Located in users' files.

Disposition: Follow disposition instructions which apply to related data.

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2800-B-6      Reports

a. Published reports of findings including methodological discussions, analyses and statistical tabulations.

Disposition: Retain or destroy with related file specifications.

b. Other output.

Disposition: Follow disposition instructions applicable under appropriate subject/function headings.

2800-B-7      Copies of Documentation, except test documentation (2800-11) and users' guides and manuals (2800-13).

Located in CIT branches and laboratories.

Disposition: Destroy when superseded or obsolete if they are of no further value to programmers, or no longer needed in relations with the user, or 5 years after completion of project, as appropriate.

2800-B-8      User Access Logs The server software automatically creates logs—recorded data involving the interaction between the host server and the client (the remote computer.) The data collected in the server logs can be used to infer information about the activity of “visits” to our sites such as domain origin, time/date of the interaction, length of stay, and navigation while at our site. This information is of value for security and administrative purposes.

Disposition: Destroy when 2 years old.

**C. Computer Programs**

2800-C-1      Information Retrieval Routines

a. General purpose programs.

Disposition: Dispose of when no longer needed.

b. Input/output routines necessary to retrieve data from specific data systems.

Disposition: Retain with related data. If data file is permanent, offer one

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copy of the program to the National Archives together with the data.

**D. Processing Files**

Computer compatible data files, exclusive of master files, which are used in various stages of data processing from initial input through output to facilitate processing.

EXCLUDED from this section are:

- (1) Master files (see appropriate subject/function heading);
- (2) History files used to store inactive data. History files should be considered as parts of master files;
- (3) Source documents from which data is abstracted for input into a machine-readable file (see appropriate subject/function heading).

2800-D-1     Test Data: Routine or benchmark data sets constructed or used for testing ADP systems (EXCLUDING data derived from experimental tests in biomedical research).

Disposition: Destroy when no longer needed.

2800-D-2     Punched cards that contain original entry data with film or written inserts, such as aperture cards, and that are used as source documents.

Disposition: Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to hard copy.

2800-D-3     Input/Source Files in computer-compatible form used to enter data into a system.

a. Non-magnetic records, e.g., punch cards, which are converted to magnetic media.

Disposition: Destroy after verification of data on related magnetic media.

b. Files used for updating and required to support reconstruction of a master file.

Disposition: Destroy after third update cycle.

c. Files maintained by ADP operational elements as back-up.

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Disposition: Destroy when no longer needed.

d. Files not used as input to another file and not required as backup to support reconstruction of a master file.

Disposition: DISPOSAL NOT AUTHORIZED.

e. Data created by another agency and routinely made available to other agencies or the public.

Disposition: Dispose of as reference material.

f. Special tabulation, extract or master files created by another agency at the request of an NIH component.

Disposition: DISPOSAL NOT AUTHORIZED.

g. Files officially designated as record copy in lieu of source documents or other hard copy.

Disposition: Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the records according to subject category.

2800-D-4     Valid Transaction Files used solely to update master files in on-going systems.

a. Used solely to update master files in on-going systems.

Disposition: Destroy after third update cycle.

b. Used for analysis independently of the master file.

Disposition: DISPOSAL NOT AUTHORIZED.

2800-D-5     Work Files used to facilitate processing of data through steps such as sort/merge, checkpoint, edit, correction, etc.

Disposition: Release for reuse upon successful completion of job.

2800-D-6     Intermediate input/output files manipulated, sorted, and/or moved from one run to a subsequent run in creating or updating a master file.

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Disposition: Dispose of after master file has been proven satisfactory.

2800-D-7      Publication Files of data extracted from another file or data base to produce a printed publication, when created without destroying the source file or data base.

Disposition: Destroy upon publication or when no longer needed for republication

2800-D-8      Print Files of data extracted from a data base or another file to produce printouts of tabulations, ledgers, tables, registers or other reports.

Disposition: Destroy when superseded or obsolete.

2800-D-9      Security Back-up File identical in format to a master file and retained in case master file is inappropriately damaged, destroyed or lost.

Disposition: Retain or destroy as provided for related master file.

2800-D-10     Reformatted File created for information exchange containing data duplicated in a master file, but written with different technical specifications.

Disposition: Retain or destroy as provided for related master file.

2800-D-11     Audit Trail File containing statistical data generated during creation of a master file and used to validate a master file during a processing cycle.

Disposition: Dispose of in accordance with instructions for each appropriate cycle of the master file.

**E. Master Files**

2800-E-1      General Administrative Files of data used for 'housekeeping' functions such as fiscal accountability, payroll, supply management, etc.

a. Required for GAO site audit or designated as record copy in lieu of hard copy.

Disposition: Retain or destroy as required for equivalent hard copy

b. Not required for GAO audit and not designated as record.

Disposition: Destroy when no longer needed for reference.



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2800-E-2     Indexes or tacking systems used for management, control or access to record materials.

Disposition: Retain or destroy according to instructions for related records.

2800-E-3     Reference indexes used to facilitate access to non-record materials such as library collections.

Disposition: Destroy when superseded or obsolete.

2800-E-4     Summary, Sample or Sub-sample Files aggregated or selected from a larger file.  
a. Created from files authorized for disposal.

Disposition: Destroy as provided for source file

b. Created from files not authorized for disposition.

Disposition: DISPOSAL NOT AUTHORIZED.

ALL OTHER MASTER FILES: DISPOSAL NOT AUTHORIZED unless specifically provided under appropriate subject/function heading.